

Heath Mount Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103333
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308282
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Evans
Headteacher	Najma Chaudhary
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
School address	Mary Street Balsall Heath Birmingham B12 9ST
Telephone number	01214 641691
Fax number	01214 644195

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Pupils' progress and their standards
- Pupils' enjoyment of school and their awareness of how to stay safe and live healthy lives
- The qualities of leadership and management that lead to high standards.

The inspector gathered evidence from observations of lessons, discussions with pupils, governors and staff, tracking pupils' progress, analysis of attendance and gaining the views of parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large and expanding school with a very high proportion of pupils whose first language is not English; Punjabi, Arabic and Urdu are the most common. Nearly a half of pupils are eligible for free school meals and a third have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These figures are much higher than in most schools. A higher than average proportion of pupils enter or leave the school other than at usual times.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school at the very heart of the community. Parents are fully justified in seeing the school as a place where their children flourish and enjoy learning. An important reason for the school's success lies in the leadership and management, not least by the headteacher who has the highest expectations of pupils, staff and herself. She knows how to improve things and inspires staff with her unwavering enthusiasm. Other leaders provide good support to the headteacher, although the school recognises that subject coordinators need to play a more active part in managing school improvement. The rigorous self-evaluation systems are based securely on accurate assessment of pupils' skills, regular checks on the quality of teaching and effective action to rectify weaknesses. This explains why the school has made such good improvements since the last inspection and why it is set to do even better.

Parents are unanimous that the teaching is exceptional, and they are not wrong. Typical lessons see teachers firing pupils' enthusiasm with exciting tasks and providing wholehearted encouragement for all pupils, whatever their ability, to do their best. This is why they do so well. Children enter the school with skills significantly below average and, by the time they leave, standards are consistently above those found nationally in English, mathematics and science. This outstanding progress puts the school consistently in the top flight of all schools in the country. Children make an excellent start in the Reception classes where the adults lay such good foundations for pupils' learning and personal development.

Pupils say how much they enjoy school and they say the best thing about school is the 'fantastic teachers who always have time to help you'. They feel safe because bullying is rare and staff take excellent care of them. All arrangements for safeguarding children meet legal requirements and are monitored closely by the well-informed governing body. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully, sets very challenging targets and provides outstanding support to ensure they have every chance to meet them. It also provides excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they make outstanding progress as a result.

The curriculum provides excellent guidance on how to live healthy lives and pupils say how much they enjoy the nutritious food at lunchtime. They think deeply about how their actions affect others and develop an excellent sense of right and wrong. As a result, behaviour is outstanding and pupils make the most of their time in lessons. The many opportunities provided for pupils to learn about the world around them mean they develop a very good awareness of the richness of different cultures. The extensive range of clubs at lunchtime and after school is very popular with pupils and does much to extend their learning in areas such as music, sport and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility for their community and they do this readily, for example the school council takes its duties very seriously and its decision to buy new waste bins has helped make the playground much tidier. Such opportunities, alongside pupils' well-developed literacy and numeracy skills, ensure they are well prepared for the future.

The school makes every effort to forge links with the community. The strong links with local churches and schools and enthusiastic support of local charities make pupils fully aware of the world around them and do much to enhance their social development.

These many strengths explain why parents are so positive about the school and the way it enables their children to develop their academic and personal skills. They feel very welcome, take part enthusiastically in the many opportunities for them to learn about how the school

works and join adult education classes. Typical of parents' comments are, 'excellent school – the best', 'amazing progress' and 'children enjoy every moment'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision in the Reception classes is excellent. The very good leadership and management ensure that the provision meets the needs of all groups of children and parents speak highly of the outstanding start it gives them. The comprehensive home–school links, starting a year before children enter the Reception, ensure that they make a smooth transition to school. The detailed assessments provide accurate measures of children's strengths and weaknesses and teachers use them expertly to plan activities at just the right level. Teachers and teaching assistants do everything to make learning fun and children love coming to school. The support for children with little or no English is exceptional and they make rapid progress. The curriculum is planned very carefully to ensure children have the right balance of academic work to improve their reading, writing and number skills and time to develop their independence and social skills through play. As a result, children make excellent progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of subject coordinators to give them more responsibility for raising standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heath Mount Primary School, Balsall Heath, B12 9ST

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and sing so beautifully in assembly. Those of you who were kind enough to speak to me showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be, because it is an outstanding school.

What I liked most about your school.

- You are very friendly and helpful to visitors and each other.
- You work very hard and make excellent progress.
- Your behaviour is excellent, both in class and out in the playground.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- You do a lot to help people who are not as lucky as you.
- The leaders are excellent and know how to improve things.
- You love the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that teach you important skills in things like ICT, music and sport.
- Your teachers are doing a brilliant job. They work very hard to plan interesting work and make your lessons fun.
- All staff at the school take excellent care of you and keep you safe.

What we would like the school to do now.

Give the teachers in charge of different subjects more responsibility for raising standards.

Good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Terry Elston Lead inspector

18 October 2007

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